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Deputy Duffy
Dáil Éireann,
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PQ Ref 56970/21 To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that heavily pregnant women who have tested positive for Covid-19 and require medical attention are left in Covid-19 ward waiting rooms for ten hours; if there are HSE guidelines for medical care specifically for pregnant women who have contracted Covid-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Duffy

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Since the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, maternity services have been committed to ensuring that the impact of COVID-19 on services and the pregnancy experience for every mother and their partner is kept to a minimum. Pregnant women are no more likely to be diagnosed with Covid-19 in comparison to non-pregnant women. However if they are diagnosed with COVID-19, they are more likely to have serious complications than non-pregnant women. The recent association between COVID placentitis and still birth underlines the importance of keeping pregnant women and the maternity services as safe as possible.

The HSE prioritises the health and safety of its service users and its staff. Managing the infection risks within our maternity service is paramount to providing a safe service to the women who use the maternity services and their babies.

The management of pregnant women suspected or confirmed of COVID-19 requires additional consideration. The Royal College of Physicians Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology issued a guidance document in May 2021 which outlines the considerations for pregnant women and their infants during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance, prepared with the best available information and evidence, contains advice for maternity units around the provision of safe care to women and infants with suspected / confirmed COVID-19 infection. This guidance can be found on the link below:

https://hse-ie.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=33573810

Maternity units have utilised the above resource to develop dedicated care pathways for non-COVID positive patients and suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive patients, thereby ensuring appropriate and safe care for all pregnant women. This approach of dedicated pathways is very much in keeping with the approach taken across other hospital services.

In relation to individual instances of care, as alluded to in your Parliamentary Question, NWIHP is unable to comment on individual cases. I would advise that if future queries persist, these would be more appropriately to and managed at local hospital level

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme